AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-35   (Canceled).

36.   (New) A method for establishing a data conference between one or more intranet computing systems and one or more external computing systems, the method comprising:

receiving a request to establish a data conference from a conference organizing computing system in an intranet;

determining that the conference organizing computing system is authorized to establish the data conference;

establishing a lobby to which potential participating computing systems in an external network are admitted awaiting authorization to join the data conference; and

subsequent to establishing the lobby,

receiving a request to join the data conference from a potential participating computing system in the external network;

admitting the requesting potential participating computing system to the lobby;

notifying the conference organizing computing system that the requesting potential participating computing system has requested to join the data conference;

receiving an indication from an intranet computing system that the requesting potential participating computing system is authorized to join the data conference; and

subsequent to receiving the indication, joining the requesting potential participating computing system to the data conference;

wherein the potential participating computing system in the external network requesting to join the data conference is placed in a lobby until the conference organizing

computing system indicates that the potential participating computer system is authorized to join the data conference.

37.   (New) The method of claim 36 further comprising determining that the potential participating computing system is allowed to be admitted to the lobby.

38.   (New) The method of claim 37 wherein determining that the potential participating computing system is allowed to be admitted to the lobby comprises:
> determining that the potential participating computing system has properly provided a conference identifier corresponding to the data conference.

39.   (New) The method of claim 38 wherein determining that the potential participating computing system is allowed to be admitted to the lobby further comprises:
> determining that the potential participating computing system has properly provided a password corresponding to the data conference.

40.   (New) The method of claim 37 wherein determining that the potential participating computing system is allowed to be admitted to the lobby comprises:
> determining that the   potential participating computing system has properly provided a password corresponding to the data conference.

41.   (New) The method of claim 36 wherein the indication that the potential participating computer system is authorized to join the data conference is received from the conference organizing computing system.

42.   (New) The method of claim 41 further comprising facilitating communication between the conference organizing computing system and the potential computing system in order to determine whether the potential participating computing system is authorized to join the data conference.

43.   (New) The method of claim 36 wherein the indication that the potential participating computer system is authorized to join the data conference is received from an intranet computing system other than the conference organizing computing system.

44.   (New) The method of claim 43 further comprising facilitating communication between the intranet computing system and the potential computing system in order to determine whether the potential participating computing system is authorized to join the data conference.

45.   (New) A computer-readable storage medium comprising instructions that, when executed by a lobby server, cause the lobby server to:

   receive a request to establish a data conference from a conference organizing computing system in an intranet;

   determine whether the conference organizing computing system is authorized to establish the data conference;

   establish a lobby to which potential participating computing systems in an external network are admitted to await authorization to join the data conference;

   intercede a request to join the data conference from a potential participating computing system in the external network;

   admit the potential participating computing system to the lobby;

   notify the conference organizing computing system that the potential participating computing system has requested to join the data conference;

   receive an indication from an intranet computing system that the potential participating computing system is authorized to join the data conference; and

   subsequent to receiving the indication, join the potential participating computing system to the data conference.

46.   (New) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 45 wherein the computer readable storage medium is system memory.

47.   (New) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 45 wherein the computer readable storage medium is persistent memory.

48.   (New) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 45 wherein the computer-readable storage medium further comprising instructions that, when executed by the lobby server, cause the lobby server to:

    prior to admiting the potential participating computer system to the lobby, determine whether the potential participating computing system is allowed to be admitted to the lobby.

49.   (New) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 48 wherein the instructions that cause the lobby server to determine whether the potential participating computing system is allowed to be admitted to the lobby comprise instructions that, when executed by the lobby server, cause the lobby server to:

    determine whether the potential participating computing system has properly provided a conference identifier corresponding to the data conference.

50.   (New) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 49 wherein the instructions that cause the lobby server to determine whether the potential participating computing system is allowed to be admitted to the lobby further comprise instructions that, when executed by the lobby server, cause the lobby server to:

    determine whether the potential participating computing system has properly provided a password corresponding to the data conference.

51.   (New) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 48 wherein the instructions that cause the lobby server to determine whether the potential participating

computing system is allowed to be admitted to the lobby comprise instructions that, when executed by the lobby server, cause the lobby server to:

determine whether the potential participating computing system has properly provided a password corresponding to the data conference.

52.   (New) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 45 wherein the indication that the potential participating computing system is authorized to join the data conference is received from the conference organizing computing system.

53.   (New) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 52 further comprising instructions that, when executed by the lobby server, cause the lobby server to facilitate communication between the conference organizing computing system and the potential computing system in order to determine whether the potential participating computing system is authorized to join the data conference.

54.   (New) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 45 wherein the indication that the potential participating computing system is authorized to join the data conference is received from an intranet computing system other than the conference organizing computing system.

55.   (New) A system comprising:

an intranet;

a lobby server that establishes a data conference in response to receiving a request from a conference organizing computing system to establish a data conference for an intranet computing system and a computing system in an external network;

wherein, in response to receiving a request to join the data conference from the computing system in the external network, the lobby server performs a method comprising:

notifying the conference organizing computing system that the computing system in the external network has requested to join the data conference;

admitting the computing system in the external network to a lobby to which potential participating computing systems in external network are admitted awaiting authorization to join the data conference;

in response to receiving an indication that the computing system is authorized to join the data conference, joining the computing system to the data conference.

56.   (New) The system of claim 55 wherein the method performed by the lobby server further comprises subsequent to joining the computing system to the data conference, transmitting by the lobby server a notification to the conference organizing system that the computing system in the external network has joined the data conference.

57.   (New) The system of claim 55 wherein the method performed by the lobby server further comprises determining that the computing system in the external network is authorized to join the data conference before joining the at the one computing system to the data conference.

58.   (New) The system of claim 57 wherein the lobby server determines that the computing system is authorized by challenging the computing system such that the potential participating computing system may successfully achieve the challenge if they are on an invitation list.

59.   (New) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the lobby server to perform the method recited in claim 55.

60.   (New) A method for joining a data conference, the method comprising:

receiving from a conference organizing system an invitation to join the data conference including a computing system in an intranet, wherein the invitation is received by a computing system in an external network;

transmitting by the computing system in the external network a request to join the data conference to a lobby server; and

receiving by the computing system in the external network an indication that it has successfully been admitted to a lobby to which potential participating computing systems in the external network are admitted awaiting authorization to join the data conference; and

receiving by the computing system in the external network an indication that it has successfully joined the data conference after an organizing computing system has indicated that the computer system in the external network is authorized to join the data conference.

61.   (New) The method of clam 60 further comprising participating in the data conference by the computing system in the external network.

62.   (New) The method of claim 60 further comprising transmitting to the lobby server credentials necessary to be admitted to the lobby.

63.   (New) The method of claim 62 further comprising transmitting to the lobby server credentials necessary to join the data conference.

64.   (New) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with instructions that, when executed by the computing system, cause the computing system in the external network to perform the method recited in claim 60.